

STUDIES

in the Spirituality of Jesuits

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An Experience in Ignatian Government
Letters to a New Rector
by

Howard J. Gray, S.J.

Published by the American Assistance Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,
especially for American Jesuits working out their aggiornamento
in the spirit of Vatican Council II

THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

consists of a group of Jesuits from various provinces who are listed below. The members were appointed by the Fathers Provincial of the United States.

The Purpose of the Seminar is to study topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and to communicate the results to the members of the Assistancy. The hope is that this will lead to further discussion among all American Jesuits--in private, or in small groups, or in community meetings. All this is done in the spirit of Vatican Council II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original charismatic inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of modern times. The members of the Seminar welcome reactions or comments in regard to the topics they publish.

To achieve these purposes, especially amid today's pluralistic cultures, the Seminar must focus its direct attention sharply, frankly, and specifically on the problems, interests, and opportunities of the Jesuits of the United States. However, many of these interests are common also to Jesuits of other regions, or to other priests, religious men or women, or lay men or women. Hence the studies of the Seminar, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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AN EXPERIENCE IN IGNATIAN GOVERNMENT: LETTERS TO A NEW RECTOR

by

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AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

The historian John Bossy has asserted, in an "Editor's Postscript" to H. Outram Evennett's *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation*,¹ that

Ignatius's, I would suggest, was an ideal which demanded almost as much of the hierarchical Church as it conceded to it, and no interpretation of it will do which makes too little room for the dialectics of obedience and initiative. Few religious superiors can have told members of their order so firmly to forget the rules and do what they thought best.

This historical interpretation squares with the experience of many Jesuit superiors. While there are valuable reflections on Ignatian government,² ultimately the exercise of religious leadership within a Jesuit community, like teaching or preaching, is not a mechanical exercise of getting the rules right but rather an art. Consequently, while research is a necessary component in the sound analysis of Ignatian priorities, the way those priorities take flesh depends on the quality of relationship between Jesuits--superiors and fellow Jesuits. It was this realization which prompted me to suggest to the other members of the Seminar that there could be value in a discussion on the art of Ignatian government today as distinct from an analysis of the theory of government. With their encouragement, I undertook this project.

The next question which confronted the Seminar was how to talk about the art of governing. Originally, the members discussed publishing a collection of varied experiences in government--from a university-community rector, a high-school community rector, from various formation rectors. While we gathered some names of possible contributors, we also found most men were wary about sharing their experiences concerning something so personal.

At that point, I offered not only to organize the project but to do the work myself. My six years as rector at Weston had given me the opportunity

to talk to theologians from all the provinces of the United States. Also, over the years I had been involved in a variety of workshops or meetings on aspects of Jesuit formation, spirituality, and government. In my work at Weston and in these workshops, I became aware that while the context of Jesuit life changes from formation community to "formed" communities, the humanity of Jesuits and their opportunities and problems as they live together do not. Formation communities have their own rhythms and limitations and myths; but so, too, do those communities which are attached to other apostolic works. Community rhythms, limitations, and myths are part of our psycho-religious structure as men who choose to live together in contemplation and work.

This continuity between Jesuit formation communities and other Jesuit communities also came home to me as I attended various local superiors' meetings. When asked to do so, I found that I could fairly easily compose a case study about a fictitious older Jesuit from my experience of younger Jesuits. As the case unfolded and discussion developed, I detected a shock of recognition that the problems uncovered were "our" problems, not just mine. My fellow superiors identified their communities in my own and reviewed their experience of limitation and opportunity in those I shared.

It was against this background of shared experience, then, that I suggested the literary device of a set of letters to a new rector. This, too, the Seminar members were willing to try.

There are obvious limitations in what I have attempted to do in this issue of *Studies*. First of all, I do not resolve problems, though I do try to give these a clearer context. Indeed, I like to think that this is one way to solve a problem.

Another limitation in this presentation is the reticence about some issues which do arise in community. Confidentiality, whether concerned with the reputation of an individual or of a community, is the foundation for good government. I have added a letter to my original set, one on problem people. The underlying issue in this letter is how to combine compassion for the individual brother while being faithful to the corporate values of the Society. This is one of the toughest problems facing superiors today, when *cura personalis* can so frequently be confused with an exclusively pastoral presence and response.³

Finally, this presentation is not a scholarly analysis of theories on

Ignatian government. In both content and form, this presentation is experiential. I do not apologize for this because I feel that something has to be said about the experience of being a Jesuit superior today. I hope that dramatizing some of the issues in religious government might prompt further reflection, personal and scholarly, on the meaning of authority, community, and mature development in religious life today.

In 1966 Miguel Fiorito offered an astute analysis of Ignatian obedience, contrasting the juridical formulation of the role of the superior and subject with the spiritual relationship which should exist between fellow Jesuits. In his summary, Fiorito said that "the superior's role contains spiritual elements which are richer, multitudinous, and very complex. They cannot easily be described in terms of black and white. And it is extremely difficult to express the necessary but delicate shadings in a written law or in terms which are exclusively juridical."⁴ In other words, Fiorito underscores the art of government.

Thus where I began, let me end, with the assertion that Ignatian government is an art. That art is the expression of a profound concern that the plurality of Jesuit personalities, talents, and graces be unified for the common expression of that charity which animates our work and our life together. This unity is a constant challenge, a recurring problem, and a rich opportunity for us now and for the General Congregation which we anticipate.

LETTER 1. ONE'S PLACE BEFORE GOD

Weston Jesuit Community

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OFFICE OF THE RECTOR

(617) 547-3742

Dear Jim: Peace

Congratulations! I am sorry that when you called last week to tell of your appointment I was rushing off to a meeting. You know that I am happy for you, your community, and the Society. You will be an excellent superior, Jim, because you care about our men. Trust that care.

When you called, you asked me--I'm sure, partly in jest--whether I had any advice. Well, the more that I thought of your new job and of what it will mean for you to leave fulltime teaching, of our past retreats together, and of our friendship, the more I realized that there was, perhaps, a more serious dimension to your request. And I suppose that I do have some advice, Jim. I extend it, as a friend, a fellow Jesuit, another superior. But take what I write here with the proverbial grain of salt. I think that what I offer is authentic; but it's my experience, gathered almost exclusively in formation work, not in university communities. Nevertheless, we share common opportunities, challenges, and problems as Jesuit superiors today. It is that commonality I'd like to touch.

No one spells this out, Jim; but, as a superior, the first reality which you have is yourself and God. We are neither the ideal men found in chapter two of the ninth part of the *Constitutions* nor the sum of expectations articulated by our own communities. Indeed, we are, like the rest of the Society, a combination of strength and weakness, grace and sinfulness, energy and apathy. We begin our jobs as superiors by accepting the mixed reality which we are.

I emphasize our mixed reality before God for two reasons, Jim:

(1) it is a radically Ignatian position from which to begin, i.e., the self before God, and (2) most of our temptations to vanity or to discouragement (and we swing between both) come from exaggerating our strengths, graces, or energy or mourning their absence. Let me say a bit more about these two aspects of our reality before God.

In our Ignatian tradition, the centrality of our self-understanding before God cannot be exaggerated. Such self-understanding is foundational to prayer and to discernment. The fifteenth introductory annotation in the *Exercises* emphasizes that the essential condition for finding God's will is first to find who I am and who God is for me. It's a kind of composition of place which frees me to see other realities from some perspective and not as a series of isolated events. This self-knowledge before God frees me to trust my experiences, my insights, my hunches. Frequently, in governing a community, you will have only these kinds of felt-realities on which to rely. When the *Constitutions*, [729], talk of the "understanding and judgment," which the General (and other superiors) ought to have, they underscore that the source of this understanding and judgment is a man's experience of how God works in his own life and how, in relationship with God, a man comes to know himself.

We superiors need input, critiques, alternate opinions, to be sure; but we are never, as superiors, simply a kind of amalgam of various community reflections. We are ourselves before God--first. So I'd want to encourage you to trust in your own faith-experience, your personal assimilation of what it has meant to you to have been a Jesuit.

Similarly, our sense of self before God reveals not only how God has met us but also where God has not been present, i.e., in our sins, our avoidance of him, our self-deceptions. Before I sound too grim, Jim, let me add that while what I'm trying to get at is the darker side of self-knowledge, it is not without its own value for bringing us to God. The last General Congregation brought me a great deal of consolation in the opening paragraph of the second decree: "What is it to be a Jesuit? It is to know that one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus, as Ignatius was. . . ."

We have to allow our sinfulness, weaknesses, and apathy to teach us about God too. If God calls us to trust our experience, he must mean *all*

our experience, the heavier, darker moments as well as the stuff of victory bulletins. Being a superior does not cure our failures; it just makes them more public!

One way to get at this self-knowledge--and a fairly interesting one, I think--is to use the time of more formal prayer to review your personal history before God. Now, I don't mean a year-by-year chronology, Jim. Rather I suggest a technique which will bring to light now how your history constitutes who you are, that identity before God which touches your feelings about yourself.

Take four or five key, positive people from your personal history, e.g., your parents, an influential Jesuit friend, a superior who governed you well. They are *key* people because they were presences who affirmed you, who were active in your coming to know that pattern of strength, grace, and energy which you appreciate both as good and your own. Hold up these people in prayer--thanking God for them, yes, but also reliving those privileged times when their affirmation of you came through. This process can take a week, e.g., a person a day. Then take the opposite experience, i.e., people who denied you affirmation or love or recognition and, thereby, similarly emphasized a pattern in you. This, of course, Jim, is much harder because it means recognizing where your weakness, sinfulness, and apathy have a history. Again, I suggest you move slowly on this--even though it can be painful.

This review of what I call "relational history" gives you a good sense of your own affectivity, of your emerging values, of the concrete instances and people who have helped to define you. The importance of bringing them into your prayer, of making them the reflective center of your prayer as you review them with God, lies in the highly personal and concrete history which they constitute.

You will find as a superior just how highly personal our government is. We have many directives in the *Constitutions*, GC 31 and 32, and Father Arrupe's letters; however, the style of government is yourself. That's the only way I know of expressing it. If you or I repress part of our own history, we will be repressive of similar pain or loss or expression of weakness in our brothers. If we have been freed by God to be forgiven and to forgive, we will encourage in our very freedom our brothers, too, to be free.

There is a more radical reason for this importance of the personal, Jim.

God's providence is similarly personal. His love is not generic but specific. In Christ, God has made his providence supremely personal, ultimately concrete. For me, this gives a little different emphasis on why Ignatius can ask Jesuits to see Christ in any superior, as the continuation of God's concrete action. When you or I have learned that personal, concrete reality is "the place" where God meets us best, we are enabled to encourage our brothers to do the same in their lives.

For too long, I believe, we Jesuits have labored under the burden of what our life "ought to be." What we could not excuse, we rewrote; what we could not rewrite, we allowed to tyrannize us. There is still much discouragement and much flight into work for work's sake among us Jesuits. One reason for this is that we have not yet learned to integrate that darker side into our spiritual autobiographies, our self-knowledge before God.

What I suggest to you, i.e., getting in touch with your personal history, will not make you, ipso facto, an effective rector. It will make you a more reflective and a more affective one. Moreover, when done, as I have suggested, Jim, i.e., in prayer with God, it will strengthen your own sense of companionship with God. This dual finality--to be with God as I come to be more at home with myself--is self-liberating.

Be good to yourself too. Get away from the community on occasion, visit other Jesuit friends, put a healthy distance between yourself and problems. Your common sense is your best guide. Again, trust your experience.

Enough, my friend. Again, congratulations and God's best.

In Christ,

Howard

LETTER 2. MODELS OF JESUIT GOVERNANCE

Dear Jim: Peace

Your response to my letter of congratulations got me to thinking, too. First of all, Jim, I'm very happy to continue the kind of correspondence we inaugurated. You're a friend, and friendship is something I don't want to take for granted anymore. Then, I find it helpful for me to write down ideas, to articulate for someone else my own experience and reflection on government. Therefore, I don't--in any way--find what you suggest a burden. Let's pursue some of these "rectorial" concerns.

You asked me to elaborate my ideas on styles of government. Let me try. These are ideas I've tossed out at superiors' meetings and even to my own community at Weston. I've tried to refine them over the years, but the basic notions come more from formation concerns than government itself. And yet, as the last General Congregation reminded us, we are in continuing formation. Enough prologue, Jim, let me zero-in on this idea of styles of government.

While I know it's a simplification, let me say that there are three trends in government, three ways in which a rector can envision and then carry on his job. These can be called models: the control model, the permissive model, and the identity model.

The control model stresses good order, external conformity, and fitting into an established set of behavior which marks his community. Rectors who see their jobs as primarily maintaining good order will emphasize the socially supportive elements of community, e.g., clear times for drinks and meals; pleasant but fundamentally safe conversation among the community members; community meetings which meet the provincial's request for having a meeting but which avoid genuine discussion and, even more, confrontation; highly impersonal--and quick--common prayer and concelebrations. In such a model, the account of conscience stresses "fitting in" and "contentment." There is rarely any deeper discussion with men about their prayer, intimacy with Christ, obstacles to peace, a concern for that "donation" in their lives which in the *Constitutions* is a sign of progress.

If the control model emphasizes "fitting-in," the permissive model stresses "letting be." It is a position which lets everything up for grabs. Sometimes it will be heard as the weary cry: "This community is

ungovernable. It has had a succession of rectors who have simply given up on changing anything. It's just a group of individuals." At other times it is heard as a more defiant creed: "If Jesuits after theology don't know how to behave, then no rector will teach them. The best rector is no rector." Whether by default or design, a rector who follows the permissive model generally escapes by making the community comfortable (the "Let's redo the rec room" syndrome or even "Let's build a nice new residence") or by working hard at projects outside the house, e.g., retreats, marriage encounters, a physics lab. Note that I am talking about *escape*, Jim, not a needed, legitimate interest outside community to maintain professional and apostolic viability.

In this permissive model--and, Jim, this is not a rare kind of Jesuit community--many of the externals mirror what I wrote above, about the control model. Food, drink, congeniality, formalism will be present but the finality is keeping appearances. In such a model, the account of conscience frequently is bypassed and relinquished totally to the provincial. Oh, I know that it was not clear at GC 32 that local superiors should indeed hear the account of those with final vows. But, nonetheless, some sort of serious one-on-one religious discussion ought to mark a rector's relationship with each member of his community. Even when the account of conscience is not bypassed, it is an elective exercise which frequently those who need help most manage to avoid. When the account does take place, the rector has a hard time doing more than listening to a quick survey of work-performance and granting permission for sabbatical sites or vacations.

Neither model--I think--is Ignatian. But both are operative in our communities--large and small. The identity model, however, looks to the way in which both the individual Jesuit and his community are integrating the values of the wider Society as enunciated in the *Exercises*, the *Constitutions*, and GC 31 and 32. It is an emphasis on authentic life style. Certainly a clear daily order, time for relaxation, meetings that begin on time and end on time, and learning just to let people be themselves are important. As rectors we need to let the human develop. But we do stand for something beyond this community, namely the wider community of the Society. That's why I'm strong on communication and accountability as the touchstones for a rector. You have to do more than tack up provincial or Roman notices. You might add your own reflection, bring in a competent

speaker on an issue like the vows, our fourth vow, have a community afternoon some Saturday or Sunday with input, discussion, liturgy, social, and dinner. The point I'm making, Jim, is the need to take your job as a religious leader seriously.

At the beginning of the year, get your own expectations out. This can be done through a community liturgy in which you use the homily to state your own desires for the group or through an inaugural meeting where you do the same. It is important *for you* to communicate where you are, how you see the group, where you feel that you can grow together. This expression of your expectations is an important and graced moment of fraternal dialogue.

I mentioned *accountability*, too, Jim. By that I meant a twofold accountability: yours to the community and theirs to you, and both to the larger Society. It has always struck me that we possess two powerful instruments for this: our annual letters to Rome as the reflection of our religious reading of the community and the account of conscience.

The annual letters to Rome can seem a pest. But I've learned what a blessing they can be to recapitulate where a community is *before the whole Society*. Before composing your own, for example, why not tell the community of your letter, remind them of the issues raised, invite their input? Then take a consultants' meeting to review your reflections. I've done both and been rewarded by the richness of insight and the sense of the community responding to something beyond itself.

The account of conscience is a precious moment of love and openness. Given the chance, our men respond to the sincere desire to know them--and, through them, the whole community--better.

Some men will not want to do or to say too much. I'd not be reluctant, Jim, to tell them that while you appreciate them and their presence before you, you still do not feel that you know them too well. It's hard to say this--but it can be done gently; and, I think, it ought to be done. I'm enclosing the set of questions which I sent the faculty here at Weston, prior to their account-of-conscience session with me. What I think we all want to move towards is a sense of our developing religious history, how God has drawn us to our vocation and how we have found ways to express this.

This letter probably opens up a whole set of further questions, Jim. But I think that the major premise is clear: What style of governance you adopt does lie in your hands. The emphasis on communication and on

accountability keeps the implementation comparatively simple.

I'm weary--this is a late-nighter. God's best, Jim!

In Christ,

Howard

Encl.

[The Enclosure]

For those of you without final vows, I would like to hear your account of conscience. In that area, I would be especially concerned with your prayer and awareness of God's presence in your life, your sense of consolation or desolation (and where these sentiments seem to lead), your physical and psychological health, your apostolic work and whether it is satisfying or not, your community life at Weston, the life of the vows and whatever especially facilitates or hinders happiness here. I would also be eager to discuss anything else which you think might help me in my job as rector, but the major focus is your life before God as a Jesuit.

LETTER 3. AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE TODAY

Dear Jim: Peace

You're right when you suggest that I presented more a sketch than a finished analysis of Jesuit governance. As you say, the crux of the problem is authority and obedience and their meaning today. This echoes what Father Arrupe said in his February, 1981, address to the French local superiors.² You recall that in that letter he attempts to respond to what many feel to be the diminished clarity about the role and function of a local superior. He emphasizes our vocation as one of companionship with Christ crucified and the exercise of religious obedience as a privileged moment of self-emptying with Christ.

This is an accurate emphasis, but it needs interpretation and discussion. Not the least of things to be discussed is the very meaning of religious obedience today. In the Council document on the renewal of religious life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, no. 14, there is a tricky expression of the finality of religious obedience as a sacrifice in order to be united "more permanently and securely with God's saving will." The notions of immolation and service found in paragraph 14 represent two different emphases at the Council, one of which underscored the abnegation inherent in obedience, the other of which underscored the service of others to which obedience leads. You have to bring sacrifice and service together in religious obedience today. Personally, I think all this also leads superiors to relate obedience to their own understanding of authority and Church, especially as these are reflected in *Lumen Gentium*.

As I reread all this, I am aware of how chunky it seems; but I am also aware that these elements contribute to my "style of government" theory. Bear with me, Jim, as I try to spell this out.

It is not enough to define authority in terms of the *object of authority*: whether to keep the organization going (the institutional model of Church), to form a community, to commission evangelization, to symbolize holiness, or to serve God's people (the communion, herald, sacrament, and servant models). We do have to look at "style," i.e., *how* you bring adults to be loyal, communitarian, evangelizing, holy, and serving. If you see authority as punitive or substitutional (i.e., you have to make sure weak or ill-formed

men do what they ought), then obedience is in the order of execution. However, if you see authority as freeing adults to use their gifts for the good of the larger group, then you are a promoter of the order of intentionality. My own reading of that no. 14 from *Perfectae Caritatis* and of Father Arrupe's further application of its principles to the role and function of the Jesuit superior today is that religious authority is there to further the relational bonding of adult Jesuits to further the redeeming and prophetic work of Jesus. In effecting such bonding, there has to be an adult willingness to bear that cross which symbolizes the practical love for others who are our brothers and sisters. The asceticism of obedience, then, is not just doing what one is told but the communal work, openness, and humility to find what God is saying about our service.

In our tradition there is a clear context for obedience and the authority it demands. First of all, the superior has a right to insist that the work of an apostolate and the good order of a community be maintained. I don't think that it is healthy or Ignatian to issue commands without any consultation or without a good basis of mutual trust. Nonetheless, there will be times when you will have to decide on a policy or a course of action where there are pluralities of opinions about what should be done. The worst thing you can do is to back off from a decision until it becomes merely the ratification of a prior community consensus. It is Ignatian to presume a superior can ask his men to be obedient.

This, in turn, suggests a second element in our tradition of obedience, Jim, namely that the community is made up of men who are adult and free enough to obey. It is hard not to read in the *Constitutions* an insistence on the quality of our membership being a prerequisite for real obedience. And, then, finally, there is a confidence in what I'd call subsidiarity i.e., the belief that the superior should not do what can be done on a more immediate level.

These three elements--the power to call to obedience, an adult religious community, and a confidence that individuals can be trusted to adapt--constitute a tradition for us. I had to present something on obedience at a recent superiors' meeting, Jim. What I ended up saying was that Jesuit obedience presupposes a superior willing to lead, a community willing to collaborate in following that leadership, and a mutual trust on both sides that allows them to adapt both commands and their fulfillment to the real

needs for community and apostolic work.

In developing your own governmental style, then, Jim, adapt these elements in the tradition to your present community. You do have the right to lead, but it has to be measured to the reality of context and of present personnel. There are some questions which can help you assess your situation: What is the history of governance of your community? Have they had good or bad superiors? What do you gather to have been the prior styles--control, permissive, identity? Is there a fundamental psycho-religious health in the group? How have prayer, worship, and charity influenced the community? Do you see men working out of professional competence for the real good of the apostolate?

I'd strongly advise you--as you begin your assessment of the community reality--to consult. Where alcoholism, serious depression, passive-aggressive behavior dominates, don't get bogged down in becoming defensive. Talk to someone professionally. My first year at Weston, I used to meet once a month with a psychiatrist to discuss problems in dealing with some cases. I found that I got good insights into the objective problem, my own defenses, and what I could or could not do.

So, when I speak about government, Jim, I mean bringing our charism to obey to life by doing what you can in your reality to guide men towards the adult donation of their gifts.

Let me know how it goes. God bless!

In Christ,

Howard

LETTER 4. PROBLEM PEOPLE IN A COMMUNITY

Dear Jim: Peace

Could I be more concrete and specific about problem people in a community? Why did you have to ask that one? Now remember, Jim, I'm coming at this from experience with another generation and with the clout of formation and ordination to give a man reason to change. Nonetheless, the problem people in every community can drain time and energy. For me the hardest thing about handling problem people is the amount of time they take from others.

When I say "problem people," I don't mean people who have problems. After all, we all struggle with areas of immaturity, suffering, and evil. Maybe we are--in a sense--all problem people, Jim. But I mean people whose way of dealing with superiors is to resist any effort to change and to persist in making the people around them unhappy. I mean those Jesuits who are preoccupied with the negative, who are always in some kind of social conflict, who never have learned to integrate life's limitations with their demand for perfection.

You say that you were blasted by one of the old-timers for shortening the dinner period a half hour to let the kitchen help get home earlier. Anyway you look at it, a 5:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. stretch is reasonable, Jim. But I don't want to get into an analysis of meal times. What fascinates me about the man is that he had to blast you. You know, of course, that he was looking for an excuse to do so, perhaps even an issue to make legitimate his attack on authority.

You mention, too, the fellow whose dependency on the students has caused a lot of comment. While you did not detail exactly how that dependency has showed itself, again I think I have a good idea of why you're concerned. That he translates his preoccupation with *some* kids as "zeal" or "warmth" or "Christlike love" does not change the fact that other good men find his behavior questionable. Again, his anger at you for suggesting that he is too needy and even, perhaps, manipulative may be a reasonable enough first reaction. But I wonder whether he will come back to you to discuss the issue. That can indicate how sincere he really is.

But let me take these two "problem people"--for you tell me that you know both men were problems for your predecessor. The problem--again, I

realize I am geographically and psychologically distant from them but I think I'm right--is one of authority and sexuality. From my experience, these two areas along with asocial behavior and depression represent the most recurring problems among our men. I want to say something about these areas, and indirectly your specific two men.

From my experience, the authority-problem person has two extremes: On the one hand he has an expectation of authority which is unreal. He really wants authority to resolve all problems, to make the world right. He may even have great fear of authority--for a variety of historical reasons--and, at one time, he may have structured his life on pleasing authority. Indeed, some men never go beyond this "fear and must-please" syndrome. But many do and then they can handle their overemphasis only by transferring the problem to the person in authority.

Now, Jim, I'm not talking about the normal annoyance which we all occasionally feel because people in authority louse things up. I'm talking about that emotionally charged, a priori rejection of authority and the almost calculating stance that seems to wait for authority to misstep. In the case of your older Jesuit, who wants the dinner to continue to 7:00 P.M., let's face it--you are not going to change him. People have probably backed off for years from confronting him. But what you did was right. You did not let him bully you by his anger. I guess that I'd invite him to come back sometime to talk about the issue, but I'd tell him that I want no harangue. That can help him learn--at least with you--how to represent as an adult instead of a spoiled child.

You get nowhere, Jim, letting people use their anger to manipulate you or a community. If the person were younger, I'd do whatever I could to get him to talk this anger out professionally.

Now that is hard. Despite all our rhetoric, we Jesuits, as a group, resist taking the proper means to the desired end. Here the proper means to address long-standing authority hang-ups is professional help. Generally this kind of resistance and the accompanying anger are not ascetical problems, so exhortations alone don't help. Rather they are psychological problems and need to be uncovered, understood, and, eventually, treated, not placated! This all takes time and expertise--which we don't have. What you, Jim, can do is to recognize the sequence of frustrated unreal expectation of authority, resentment, strong and inappropriate anger which is used to control the life

of a community or a superior, and a chronic, a priori rejection of authority.

The second recurring problem area is an unintegrated sexuality. We can repress our sexuality unhealthily and we can express our sexuality inappropriately. Cold, unresponsive, uncaring Jesuits are frequently this way because it is safe. Some seem to say: If you "do" your job and neither give nor expect any affective response, you get into no trouble. On the other hand, others can seem to say: Find your substitute for wife and family. The healthy direction of the Society is neither extreme. Rather, it is a facility to relate with affection and genuine concern while never betraying the trust which our chastity proclaims. Now, most of our men really are in that middle ground, Jim. You and I know that people fail; but, by and large, the Jesuits I have met struggle successfully to bring their sexual identity into a peaceful harmony with their apostolic chastity, i.e., an affectionate concern which can be trusted.

I would not wait long to deal with people whose sexuality is not expressed in an affectionate concern which can be trusted. I would--once I have real evidence--confront the man on why people do not trust his chastity. It is a delicate area, and you know that I'm not talking about a trigger-happy response to every ambiguous situation. I'm talking about those situations which show a clear pattern of public inappropriate sexual behavior; and by "pattern" I mean the behavior is repeated, that is, done twice. This sounds hard-nosed, but too much is at stake.

I know "styles" differ but I'd still say the direct, unambiguous approach is the best, e.g., "This behavior is wrong. Let's talk about why you do this," or "Your public behavior makes people who are sane and dedicated nervous. They *could* be over-reacting. In any case, I think we ought to talk about it." This is very hard, I know. In self-defense a man can become angry, lash back, or become hurt. But note, Jim, that I'm talking about *behavior*, an external and social event. You cannot avoid correction in something which could undercut our apostolic trust.

Frequently, again, such men will need an expertise which you or I or the provincial do not possess. They should get that help.

I haven't said much about the man whose sexuality has been so repressed that affection and concern never show themselves. I really find that our effort here is to be examples to them of what we would like them to become. But here, too, professional help may be called for.

I want to touch on those other two problem areas: social withdrawal and depression. The social withdrawal I'm talking about is the pattern of avoiding genuine community action--be it shared prayer, concelebration, or speaking up at a meeting. The depression I'm speaking about is a diffuse "feeling bad" most of the time which inhibits one's ability to work, to sustain real interest, to feel joy in his life. These areas, too, are very tricky, Jim. Again, I am strong on accepting the limits of what you can do and on seeking to help these men through professional guidance.

In appealing to outside resources such as psychiatric or psychological experts, I do not mean we do nothing as superiors. We *support* these men in coming to a greater self-knowledge and to a greater freedom. We do not translate sentimental disregard of their problem as love! What is the real tragedy, for me, is how often we have postponed such treatment and substituted exhortations for the love of honest confrontation.

Again, it's late and I'm tired. You'll be in my prayers. Remember the problem people are small compared to the number of terrific men we have. Thank God for the great good the Society is--even when you sometimes doubt it!

In Christ,

Howard

LETTER 5. CREATING AN APOSTOLIC COMMUNITY

Dear Jim: Peace

Yes, I know what you mean about feeling some discouragement in trying to meet a variety of expectations about Jesuit community. I think that you've been facing a crucial problem: the call to create a community and the sometimes conflicting expectations Jesuits can place on that creation. I'm going to go into this at some length, Jim--again, as I said, this is as much to clarify my own thinking as to carry on our exchange. Anyway, bear with my not-too-subtle lecture-style; I'm trying to spell out something I believe to be accurate but still hard to communicate.

Decree 11 from GC 32, which is our last formal piece of legislation on community, is a remarkable document. It was composed in comparative peace, but it has been subsequently read and lived by us in some struggle. Jim, I'd like to discuss that decree as a point of definition for Jesuit community.

The decree has two major parts: a theoretical consideration (nos. 3-34) and a set of practical guidelines (nos. 35-52). In its theoretical considerations, three key ideas emerge: Communities come from our union with God in Christ which, in turn, effects fraternal communion, and is finally expressed in an obedience which creates apostolic union. Note the operational realities: union with God in Christ, fraternal communion, and apostolic obedience.

There have been several excellent commentaries on this decree, commentaries which define or describe what constitutes Jesuit apostolic community today. While these commentaries may emphasize different aspects, they do present a fairly coherent direction. Let me try to spell these aspects and direction:

1. Jesuit communities are locations (i.e., places) which, through openness to God and to one another, become a *communio*. Therefore, they are *in process*.
2. These communities are not monastic but apostolic and, consequently, are realized by the willingness of the membership to be sent to help others; i.e., a *missio*.
3. Both the *communio* and *missio* aspects of Jesuit community are important because they relate us to the heart of the Church which is

both a band of faithful who support one another and a people of God called to preach the good news to every people.

4. None of these values of Jesuit community can be realized unless there is a superior mandated by the wider community of the Society who calls the local community to sincere, religious ongoing communication of their lives. This communication is realized through conversation, shared prayer, discussion, and communal discernment.

This is the general direction the interpretations of the decree have taken.

If we were Xerox machines and not men, Jim, then we could have simply duplicated these qualities in strict, lifeless, uniform ways. But we are not machines. Therefore, we have read the design for a modern Jesuit community in a variety of ways. The dilemma is not the variety--that is inevitable--but that there are emphases which can distort the way we try to implement our design for Jesuit community. There are two major ways people approach the Congregation's concern for Jesuit community which are seriously defective: One is to read the document with a certain nostalgia; the second is to read the document with despair. Let me describe each of these, Jim.

Nostalgia, as I use it here, is "any wistful or excessively sentimental, sometimes morbid, yearning for a return to some past period or irrecoverable condition." The nostalgic reading of decree 11 can come from a liberal or a more conservative bias. The liberal Jesuit can read the description of Jesuit life as a call to return to a community of primitive integrity unencumbered by struggle or step-by-step, slow progress. Frequently, he will appeal to our need to be "Ignatian," translating that into his yearning to live as did the first companions of Ignatius, vaguely judging that schools, specific works, property, and the demand they make on our time prevent us from being able to be "friends in the Lord."

The more conservative Jesuit can read that same decree and find the language romantic and even threatening. He can yearn to return to those "good old days" when Jesuits lived together in an area of safe masculine enclave called "cloister"; when the demands of community were met mechanically by a punctual presence at first visit, meals, litanies, and the monthly exhortation; and when the schools were "Ours" and "laymen" were those loyal supportives who knew to whom the school really belonged.

One can read decree 11 with a liberal nostalgia to return to the

simplicity of 1539 or with a more conservative nostalgia to erase the language and return to 1959. In either case it is an instance of asking Jesuit communities to become a museum, not a life-project.

Or, Jim, you'll find that there can be a despairing reading of decree 11. To despair is to relinquish hope, i.e., the confidence that God will fulfill in us what he has inspired. As in the instance of a nostalgic reading of decree 11, a despairing reading can be that of a Jesuit who is liberal or conservative. Again, let me illustrate.

A liberal Jesuit can read decree 11 as the description of what the Jesuit community must be *now*. Thus terms like "openness," "communal discernment," "friends in the Lord," and "service" must describe the immediate community in which he lives. When he confronts the reality of sinful men who are sometimes distrustful of one another and, therefore, incapable of sharing their struggles, ambitions, or prayer or when he meets gossip and sarcasm about one another, lay faculty, or students, and therefore, an expenditure of energy not to be "friends in the Lord" but "enemies," he despairs. Confronted by the sluggish pace of community renewal or the sinful resistance to sincere communication, he wearies not of the sin but of sinful, struggling community. In disillusionment, he may leave the body of the Society or the spirit of its corporate renewal. In either case, the despairing liberal turns his back on a community which has failed to live up to the ideals of the text.

Similarly, the Jesuit of more conservative leanings sees the years after GC 31 and GC 32 as ones of steady decline. The possibilities of decree 11 do not touch him because he can read only a series of losses: of symbols, order, property, apostolic control, and numbers of Jesuits. Those realities which defined Jesuit success for him in the past are no longer present or have been seriously weakened. Consequently, losing his past, he cannot find in that decree anything in which to hope.

So Jim, whether a Jesuit reads decree 11 as a promise unfulfilled or one more change which destroys his sense of continuity and identity, the effect is the same, "a democratic despair" which can afflict both liberals and conservatives, leaving both with a deep sense of loss.

The enemy of true progress towards authentic Jesuit community is twofold: an unrealistic yearning to go backwards or a hopeless feeling that we cannot create something new in the future. They are enemies who seduce

us from an energetic encounter with the present. And yet there are few moments in our Ignatian heritage as vital and realistic as the directive: *Ask for what you want*. Ignatius believed that those who found in Christ both Redeemer and Friend could have confidence in their desires. Individually or corporately, we become what we wish.

The controlling structural metaphor of the Jesuit *Constitutions* is that of the pilgrimage. It is only in more recent times that scholars have called attention to the notion of pilgrimage as central to the founding of our Society. As Ignatius saw himself as "el pelegrino," "the pilgrim," so he saw his Society of Jesus. The *Constitutions* are composed as a pilgrimage, guidelines for a Jesuit as he moves from candidacy to death, passing through his stages of personal and social development, becoming--through his journey of finding God--a godly man.

This Ignatian pilgrimage spirit is not "vacillation." Rather it is, as Joe Whelan expressed it in an exhortation to the Maryland Province, "tough and stubborn and determined." It is a quality of spirit, of a human psyche animated by God's graciousness which moves always onward. For the geographic reality of the Society is vast yet unified (as the last Congregation has insisted, we are *one* Society) by the desire to journey anywhere to find God's will.

The journey to find God through his will for us is the fundamental reason why we are mobile and apostolic; that is, why we are on the move for the sake of helping other people. For God's will in Ignatian mysticism is not bound to the monastic sense of stability but rather to a new sense of journeying in faith to the worlds without Christ.

If this pilgrimage motif does give symbolic coherence to our *Constitutions*, to our mysticism, and to our essential charism, then it must influence that social phenomenon and religious event we call "community." The journey, the pilgrimage, of our apostolic community life is not a call to become geographic nomads or gypsies. Rather, it is, first of all, a metaphor or symbol for the profoundly developmental ways communities become genuinely Ignatian, how they move into more and more adult Christian life together. Nostalgia is wrong for us because it destroys the religious metaphor of the pilgrimage; thus rather than move forward to that sacred place where God calls us beyond our present securities, we dream or lament our way into a past historical literalism which we can never recapture. Similarly, despair,

a "giving-up-on" community because it does not *now* reflect the ideal is to reject the tough, stubborn asceticism of our pilgrimage, asceticism which is a willingness to move within reality, not a perfectionism which defines reality only according to our narrow experience and fearful ambitions.

Jim, we cannot mistake the issue before us and the whole Society today. Either our community life will be a constant spiritual journey to find God anew each day, each year, and together or we will lose the heart of our spirituality. We may retain buildings, daily orders, work, and a clubby atmosphere. We will *not* retain our soul. Without the pilgrim soul, the body is a corpse, not a community.

These realities are what the 32nd Congregation is getting at. There are not two worlds: one where Jesuits eat, sleep, drink, and joke and the other where Jesuits work. There is one pilgrimage world, one mysticism which is energizing our lives, and that is the blessed, rich phrase: *the apostolic community*, men who live their call to find God's designs in their *integrated* life.

Now our spirituality--which is personal and social, individual and communitarian--has a clear set of developmental patterns, i.e., a distinguishing, maturing characteristic which helps us to discern whether our pilgrimage, our quest for God's will, is sound or sick. These characteristic patterns of sound development are: freedom, discipleship, labor, and transcendence; each developmental characteristic reflects the emphasis of the so-called "Weeks" of the Exercises. Let me say a word about each.

Freedom is spiritual freedom, the ability to donate oneself because I know my history, temperament, and talent. I am capable of giving myself, even as sinner, because Christ has freed me, graced me, to journey with him. The "fruit" of the First Week of the Exercises is the ability to give myself to Christ as Redeemer. When we speak, too glibly, I believe, of people's readiness to move to the Second Week, we do not always sufficiently articulate what the grace of readiness genuinely is. The Kingdom is a "test": *Am I free enough to hear Christ?*

The Second Week of the Exercises takes the free man or woman, here the Jesuit, and asks whether the Redeemer can become the Exemplar, the one who dramatizes the only human strategy for a true pilgrimage of grace.

The Third Week of the Exercises takes that free person who lives and desires to serve Christ by accepting his strategy, i.e., poverty, humiliations,

and humility, and says, "Will you now labor with him, carry the Cross of the consequences of living as one who loves even in the face of hatred and rejection?"

Finally comes the magnificent Fourth Week, with its dual clarification of Resurrection and Consecration. In the mysteries of the gospel narratives about Christ and the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love, this Week invites that free disciple who has totally identified with Christ to let go, to move beyond even the present mission to the wider designs of God. This transcendence, this spiritual dissolution, is the death we all will face but also the many deaths which anticipate that final death. Can I so live that even after strenuously doing the work which is God's present will, I can leave it to others in order to accept the new stage of God's will for me? We have many examples of Jesuits who have done this, such as Father General Arrupe, the Central American martyrs, those who surrender to age and infirmity with quiet dignity, those "sent" from a comfortable life to some new beginning.

To journey together in freedom, discipleship, labor, and self-transcendence is not religious romanticism. It should be the very experience of our life together. Only if we grasp this will we begin to appreciate what our Ignatian vision should be.

Egad! Jim, as I reread this, I feel as if I've laid an exhortation on you. But these things touch our survival as communities. Anyway, Jim, let me know whether this helps--or, at least, how you feel about these ideas.

God's best!

In Christ,

Howard

LETTER 6. WHAT IS JESUIT PRESENCE?

Dear Jim: Peace

We've been averaging a letter every four to six weeks, something I thought I'd never find time to do. I'm glad that you've found these helpful. As you say, you'd probably see some things differently, but the issues are ones we have to face.

In your last letter you said: "There is one area that seems more an opportunity for me than a problem. As the rector of a university community, what can I do to bring our community to relate to the university? I don't mean simply--as you indicated, Howard--a community offering support for those who are in the work, but a community impacting the apostolate. But I have some doubts. Perhaps that would go against the reasons for which separate incorporation of our Jesuit community from the university was established. Do I, *as rector of the Jesuit community here*, have any responsibility over and above supporting the individual Jesuits who administer, teach, or serve in staff roles at the university apostolate?"

I think you do; and in his letter to the local superiors, Father Arrupe would indicate the same thing. How you express your responsibility is a sensitive area. As one Jesuit friend told me, there is only so much power to go round. Generally speaking, university presidents--ditto high-school and divinity-school presidents--are men of talent, energy, and dedication. They want to do a good job and they have to take the heat for mistakes. All these elements combine to make them, correctly, sensitive to having the Jesuit community become another constituency to whom they have to respond. And sensitivity is the word, Jim. You have to see your role as one of collaboration, which, I think, is more than simply supporting.

You seem to have a good relationship with your president. Meeting with him once a month to discuss opportunities, directions, and problems has been an excellent mechanism to isolate issues and to develop a kind of team mentality. This kind of exchange probably takes care of immediate communication. But let me suggest that more than maintenance is something I talked about in a previous letter--*vision*.

For Ignatius the Society of Jesus existed *not* wherever there was a *Jesuit house* but wherever there was a *Jesuit presence*. It is this Jesuit

presence which made the community, not the community which made the presence. We are still developing our understanding of Jesuit presence today and of how to communicate this, especially in the face of decreasing Jesuit manpower. For me, this is where a Jesuit rector like yourself can make the greatest ideological impact on the apostolic vision of your men.

That presence is--again one of my favorite words--a style, a way of being-in-relationship to a work. Our presence, our Jesuit style, comes from the *Exercises* and the *Constitutions*. Here, Jim, I don't mean by "comes from" a series of propositions which influence our rhetorical identities but rather a psycho-religious set of values which consistently influence the way we relate to one another, our lay colleagues, our students.

There are discernible touchstones of this presence, this style, this expression of our values. These are freedom, discipleship, compassion, and transcendence; they are the fundamental rhythms of each of the four Weeks of the *Exercises*. The First Week is about spiritual freedom, about a capacity to donate oneself to love. (This is the distinguishing characteristic of those who are capable of moving into the Second Week; without that capacity for self-donation, a person should not go beyond the preliminary, albeit vital, work of preparing one to be free.) The Second Week is about discipleship, as the set of non-negotiables which constitute Christ's way of being a genuine Son. The Third Week confronts the cost of love which is compassion, the ability to suffer along with those one has claimed as friend. The Fourth Week is about self-transcendence: both the Resurrection contemplations and the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love call us to move beyond ourselves in the joy of God's design which, if we want His will, endures beyond our lifetime. I love the Fourth Week because it holds out a vision of generativity that is united to God's. Anyway, Jim, this encapsulated reflection on the rhythm of the *Exercises* is foundational to our way, as a group, of establishing a presence. Let me spell this out.

1. The *freedom* of a community is essential. Can the men speak of their lives, apostolic ambitions, and struggles so that they feel they are known and accepted? The reason that the 31st and 32nd Congregations stress interpersonal communication has nothing to do with sentimental hand-holding or amateurish encounter-grouping. The weary cynics of every Jesuit community have parodied the attempts to do what Ignatius envisioned and too often have frightened superiors into a peace-at-any-price tolerance which

will kill the renewal we all must have.

If we do not approach, in our encounters with each other, something of the secure simplicity of good prayer before God, we are not free enough, corporately, to become formed into genuine apostolic identity. Our fear, cynicism, and anxiety will isolate us from the grace of the *Exercises* and the *Constitutions*. It is a superior's job to present the community with the possibility of spiritual freedom *as a group*. You cannot do it overnight, I know. But we must be willing to journey towards it--to be on pilgrimage towards finding God *in each other*, not our guarded public selves but our real, vulnerable selves, the self I spoke of in my first letter to you.

2. If a community has a reasonable climate of spiritual freedom so that men can trustingly share their expectations for Jesuit life, then they can progress to *a corporate experience of discipleship*. This can be in the Liturgy of the Word as we share the significance of the gospel for ourselves, in a shared prayer over a gospel message, in a small-group or in a large-group weekend away. But if, to the very men who share our love for Christ, we speak only self-consciously or furtively of how Christ calls us, we can lose the practical sense of Christ living in one another. We have to wrestle together with how we can make the gospel as central to our conversation as *Dallas*, the Bruins, province gossip, the foibles of the rector, and the virtues or vices of the present federal or state leaderships.

3. If a free group of Jesuits who have come to know each other and have come to a rhythm of shared faith in Christ can also see through the moments of Christ's suffering to the suffering around them: in the students who now provide their moments of finding God, in the parents who now provide their moments of finding God, in all the human hearts so lonely, angry, searching who are now the wider community of their school, then the pilgrimage of that community is in the right direction. Beyond our self-revelation and our intra-community sharing of Christ lies the further sharing of *how we can labor more compassionately in companionship with Christ*. Jesuit communities should have pastoral sessions in which they, like Jesus, touch the human pain around them; and, in that compassion which shares it, can help to heal it. The only thing that inhibits our living the Third Week of Christ's compassion is our imagination. How does a community enter into the Christ who labored in his compassion for us unless we take some time to labor in our compassion for our world?

4. Finally, a Jesuit community where men can be present to each other in their histories, their faith, and their compassion will be *called beyond itself*. Our numbers are small and growing smaller. Our times have forced us to rethink what "Jesuit presence" means. From the power of ownership and dominion, we are moving into the power of example and service. It has not always been a graceful transition. Can we live the *Suscipe*--"Take, Lord"? Can we let God take away clericalism? prestige? dominance? Can we let others do what ten years ago Jesuits only might have done and still be happy and peaceful? Shared ministry demands a sharing clergy. It is as simple as that. Too often, however, there has been no religious foundation for this sharing. We can give grudgingly, resenting the lay administrator, the lay voice, the plurality of ministry itself.

Jim, there is such grace for us to hear anew the riches of our spirituality as being communal, not individual. The spiritual task of a rector is not only to support individuals but also to call the community to bring its vision to flesh and blood. This is what makes us apostolic--not simply work, but a work with a kind of presence. Our works will not make it *as Jesuit* if Jesuits do not start being Jesuits together. In the genius of Ignatius, a Jesuit carried the Society in himself, not in a monastery or a set rule of life. We are not identified by place or work or garb but by the quality of our individual and communal lives. If Jesuits like one another, trust one another, pray with one another, worship together, fight and reconcile together, worry about people together, grow together--then the work they do becomes apostolic. If they turn their backs on taking the quality of their religious presence seriously, they become glorified civil servants. We can become together and in a profound way friends in the Lord, the companions of Jesus, the Society of his love.

I guess, Jim, that every rector faces a fundamental question: Will I choose to keep a shop or lead a community? I'm glad to claim as a friend someone like you who has chosen to lead.

In Christ,

Howard

LETTER 7. THE LOVE THAT LEADS

Dear Jim: Peace

Well, you're finishing your first year as rector and I'm finishing my last. I could think of no better way to integrate my own past experience than to do so by sharing it with you. I admit that once in awhile I regretted promising to write out some responses, but that was laziness. Thanks for asking me to be a kind of partner with you.

A few years ago, someone whom I consider to be also a good friend was asked about being rector of his community. He had not had an easy time with some of the community, but he seemed to be an excellent choice. He asked me what I thought. I told him that he was a man of prayer and ideals, an excellent administrator, willing to make tough decisions, and familiar with the *Exercises* and the *Constitutions*. He looked at me and said, "Yes, but, Howard, I don't love the men here--not really!"

That was an honest admission--not, I am certain, of sin, but of sinfulness, of a lack of that devotion Ignatius speaks of so frequently in the *Constitutions*. This friend "loved" in the sense of wishing his brothers well, of being willing to do for them; but what he meant was that he felt no devotion, no really spontaneous desire to be present to them affectively. I'd say he had no devotion for government in the Society. Arrupe does; and we will look back on his years as a time when the whole Society knew what it was to be loved by its General.

You have this, too, Jim, a devotion for your community, a facility to find God in them. I think of Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* when Margaret, More's daughter, begs him to take the oath:

Margaret: [emotionally] But in reason! Haven't you done as much as God can reasonably want?

More: Well . . . finally . . . it isn't a matter of reason; finally it's a matter of love.

Finally, Jim, it is a matter of love, Ignatian love for our brothers. If I had any one piece of advice, I'd say simply pray for the grace to love your brothers. The gift God gives in response does not make problems go away, but it does usher us into the presence of God's love. We stand with our Lord, surveying the world of our community: the fervent and the weak, the quick and the shy, the boastful and the withdrawn, the leader and the

follower--and God invites us to cherish not what should be but what is. I believe this is the real "grace of office," the gift to become, with all its messiness and risk, a more loving man.

I wish this for you, Jim. And I wish a good summer, too. I'll keep you to that promise of a dinner. I'll let you know when I'll be in town--probably the last week of June. Meanwhile, God's best.

In Christ,

Howard

AN AFTERWORD

In the Seminar discussion which followed the presentation of my draft, the other members had several very valuable additions. Some of these I have tried to incorporate into the final version; however, some represented another perspective or experience. These latter suggestions I could not easily include. What these suggestions all indicate, though, is the value of presenting some ideas on being a local superior today. Ultimately, the worth of this kind of presentation is the reflection and discussion it promotes about being more Christian and, therefore, more religiously effective in our community and our apostolic relationships.

The major additional set of comments centered on the role of the Jesuit community vis-à-vis the university apostolate. Such questions as these surfaced: How does a superior of a large university community deal with talented but basically negative people in that community who resist change, e.g., simpler life style, more truly interpersonal community sharing, weekends of prayer?

How does a basically cultural-affirming spirituality, which frequently supports the university professional, conform with decree 4 of GC 32? While every apostolate is supposed to be influenced by decree 4, many in university work prefer being loyal to what they term "real" education. Can these two notions of the role of Jesuits in education be harmonized?

What about those communities which are top-heavy with retired Jesuits? How does a rector lead virtually two different kinds of communities? How do you effectively discuss apostolic directions when the majority of your community is not involved in that apostolate?

Some members of the Seminar asked me to specify what young Jesuits expected from the "formed" communities into which they would soon go. There are a couple comments which I would like to make about the community expectations of younger Jesuits.

First, there is no univocal Jesuit type I could call "younger Jesuits." Some are liberal; some are more traditional. Some find small community the only way to live Jesuit life; others can hardly wait to get back into a larger group. What I find the younger Jesuit theologians do have in common is a willingness *to talk out their differences*. I find that being fewer in number than many of us were, younger Jesuits place a high value on unity. The unity they desire is not uniformity, but a commitment to honesty, clarity

about the divisions, and a willingness to come to reconciliation. This, I think, is healthy and a sign of hope for our future.

Second, the vast majority of the younger Jesuits with whom I have dealt reverence, *in the practical order*, the means to obtain such dialogue, honest dissent, and reconciliation. Those means are shared prayer before a meeting--a meeting in which people *all* speak directly and respectfully, even when they get angry--and a desire to work towards unity even in diversity. I suppose that this says much about the kind of religious and psychological environment which facilitates such discussion. That I leave to another Seminar study.

Finally, some members wanted me to say more about the incorporation of the *Exercises* into Jesuit government. Actually, I think that this is what I have tried to do throughout the letters, although I have not always made explicit citations of the text of the *Exercises*. In any case, I have chosen to let my text stand as it is. A more careful elaboration of the *Exercises* as a source of Jesuit governance is also something better left to a future issue of *Studies*.

No one writes in a vacuum. My reflections on Jesuit governance today originate from the happy experience of being a member of excellent communities. My last six years at Weston have taught me much, especially how to find God in talking about God to one's brothers. It is indeed the fidelity of God which, ultimately, leads not only each of our Jesuit communities, but that larger reality, the one community of our Company. In the truest sense, God is our only superior.

FOOTNOTES

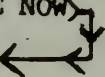
- 1 John Bossy, "Editor's Postscript," in H. Outram Evennett, *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation, the Birbeck Lectures in Ecclesiastical History given in the University of Cambridge in May, 1951* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 130.
- 2 Among those which I have found most helpful are: Pedro Arrupe, "The Local Superior: His Apostolic Mission," *SJ Documentation* No. 48 (April, 1981); John C. Futrell, S.J., *Making an Apostolic Community of Love* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970); and Jacques Lewis, S.J., *Le Gouvernement spirituel selon saint Ignace de Loyola* (Montréal: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961); a chapter on Ignatius' spiritual government (*Gobierno espiritual y paterno*) in Father Candido de Dalmases' *El Padre Maestro Ignacio: Breve Biografía Ignaciana* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979), of which an English translation is forthcoming from the Institute of Jesuit Sources.
- 3 Desmond O'Donnell, O.M.I., "The Problem Member in a Community," *Review for Religious* 40 (1981), 203-209. Father O'Donnell treats many of the same issues which I explore in Letter 4, but his classification is more clinical. It is a valuable article, especially the six suggestions with which he concludes his article.
- 4 Miguel A. Fiorito, S.J., "St. Ignatius' Intuitions on Obedience and their Written Juridical Expression," *Woodstock Letters* 95 (1966), 141-142.

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Father Jules J. Toner, S.J., received his Ph. D. degree in 1952 and since then has been chiefly a professor of philosophy. For more than twenty-five years, however, he has also been increasingly engaged in spiritual counseling and in directing retreats. Since 1970 he has devoted much time to lecturing and conducting workshops on Ignatian spiritual discernment. He has published two books and numerous articles, including two issues on discernment in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*.

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